



WE ARE an urban elementary school in Indianapolis Public Schools. There are 64 schools and 2,579 teachers providing education for 29,581 students. The district has 69% free and reduced lunch. Meredith Nicholson Elementary School has 91% free and reduced lunch.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Meredith Nicholson has 411 students from 10 different countries. 72% are Hispanic. 57% are English Language Learners.

OUR TEACHERS

Meredith Nicholson has 50 staff members: four are ESL teachers and three are ESL assistants.

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE

JAM is an acronym that stands for Just A Minute of exercise. The Gopher is our school mascot and we combined the two to make Gopher JAM. We are focusing on the importance of exercise and living a healthy active lifestyle. We believe exercise makes the brain ready to learn. We were inspired by Dr. John Ratey's book SPARK which explains the brain-fitness connection. The connection between learning and fitness that we create with just a short burst of exercise allows students to get their need for movement out during appropriate times rather than to disrupt classes and learning.

OUR STEPS

Every morning at 10 a.m. the vice principal calls out to the school over the intercom that it's time for Gopher JAM. Everyone in the school stops where they are and what they are doing to follow along with the exercises called out over the intercom. A few examples of the exercises are jumping jacks, skipping and touching elbows to opposite knees while balancing on one leg. Each exercise or activity lasts ten seconds and it continues for one minute. The whole school is involved.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

"I like Gopher Jam because it makes our heart healthy." - Student

"I like Gopher Jam because it is healthy to do exercise." - Student

"It gives necessary brain breaks to students so they can focus on critical instruction." - Teacher

"Increases motivation to be happy in school." -Parent